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### Jacob Sonner '14 Wins National Writing Award

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and different races, so that the doll looked like them – and the child could act out the sexual violation with the doll. We could videotape that and could use those videotapes to indict a defendant.”

But it was emotionally wrenching work – “all these things you couldn’t wrap your mind around,” Darling says. “Those cases were terrible. When you tried them, usually the offender was someone who lived in the child’s home, an uncle or the mother’s boyfriend, for example. And when you lost those cases, you knew the child was going back into the home with the abuser.”

But she did learn her way around a courtroom, and some of the techniques that sway juries. In one trial, of a man accused of concealing a sawed-off shotgun, Darling gave her entire summation with the gun in the pocket of her skirt, hidden by her jacket – and at the end with a flourish showed the jury that she – nine inches shorter than the defendant – had been concealing the weapon the whole time. The jury took 20 minutes to convict him.

When her three-year commitment to the DA’s office was over, she went into private practice, initially doing civil defense work for a Wall Street firm. But a sense of perspective remains. “I did realize that even if you lost a case it was only money, as opposed to a child going back to live with an attacker,” she says. And even now, as she represents people whose lives have been derailed by others’ negligence, “the stakes are very, very high for my clients, but nothing like that.”

She joined Meyer, Suozzi in 1992 after nine years practicing personal injury law with another Garden City firm. “I’ve been doing this for a long time now; I’m really involved with my clients and truly care about the people we represent,” she says. “I’ve represented some of the children of past clients. When you are out there and do good work, a lot of it is word of mouth. And jurors see you, and when they get hurt they call you.”

And the phone on her desk keeps on ringing.



## *Jacob S. Sonner '14 wins national writing award*

Law student **Jacob S. Sonner '14** has been awarded the 2014 Distinguished Legal Writing Award by the Burton Foundation for his article in the *Buffalo Law Review's* August 2013 issue, “A Crack in the Floodgates: New York’s Fourth Department, the PLCAA, and the Future of Gun Litigation After *Williams v. Beemiller*.”

The Burton Award is given to 15 authors from among entries submitted by the nation’s top law schools. Sonner will receive his award at the foundation’s 15th anniversary program, June 9 at the Coolidge Auditorium of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. This year’s program is dedicated to rewarding achievements in law, with a special emphasis on writing and reform. Award winners are selected by law school professors and judges, including professors from Harvard, Columbia and Stanford law schools.

A Western New York native, Sonner received bachelor’s degrees in journalism/mass communications and history from St. Bonaventure University in Allegany, N.Y., in 2011. In May, he received his J.D. from SUNY Buffalo Law School.

While in law school, Sonner worked as a law clerk with Legal Services for the Elderly, Disabled or Disadvantaged of Western New York and as a research assistant for Christine Pedigo Bartholomew, a lecturer in law, legal analysis, writing and research at the Law School. Sonner also served as an executive publications editor for the *Buffalo Law Review*. He will join Damon Morey in Buffalo as an associate attorney.